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A vice-president needs to step in at a moment's notice, and last Thursday's debate showed without any doubt that Joe Biden is ready. Joe Biden won a clear victory because he made a passionate case for change from the disastrous economic and foreign policies of the last eight years.

Joe Biden's words on foreign policy are backed up by more than 35 years of steadfast support for the nations of Central and Eastern Europe. After the collapse of communism, he championed NATO expansion, helping to bring Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and seven other countries under NATO's security umbrella. He recognized the need for U.S. assistance in Eastern Europe, and fought for passage of critical legislation that has provided billions of dollars for the region's economic and political development. Against fierce opposition, Senator Biden led the fight to save Radio Free Europe, ensuring a vital link to the West for millions of people. In contrast to Republican neglect and distraction, he has continued to make Eastern Europe a strategic priority.

When Russian forces invaded Georgia in August, Joe Biden responded immediately – and in person. As tanks closed in on Tbilisi, Biden was the first U.S. elected official to travel to the Georgian capital and, as President Saakashvili noted, "the first one to come up with a very concrete program of what should have been done in that very complicated situation." He proposed \$1 billion in reconstruction assistance to help the people of Georgia, which has now been adopted as U.S. policy.

Joe Biden and Barack Obama understand what we need to do to keep Russia in check, to keep Eastern European countries free, and to keep the United States secure. Barack Obama and Joe Biden have consistently called for NATO Membership Action Plans for Ukraine and Georgia, and support their admission to NATO when they are ready.

Unlike John McCain, Barack Obama did not merely denounce Russian aggression after the fact, he repeatedly pointed to the growing danger. Months before the

conflict, he warned of Russia's wrongly-named "peacekeeping" force on Georgian territory, and he called for its replacement by a truly neutral international force. Two weeks before Russian tanks moved in, he drew attention to Russian provocations and warned of Russia's "determination to challenge Georgia's territorial integrity" in South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

While others rushed to pledge their support for Georgian territorial integrity after the war, Barack Obama did so beforehand – and he and Joe Biden will continue to do so. Barack Obama will not fall into the trap of wishful thinking. "We can't think that by looking into somebody's eyes that we're seeing their soul."

Here is what Barack Obama said in his first presidential debate on September 26:

"...a resurgent and very aggressive Russia is a threat to the peace and stability of the region. Their actions in Georgia were unacceptable.... They have to remove themselves from South Ossetia and Abkhazia. It is absolutely important that we have a unified alliance, and that we explain to the Russians that you cannot be a 21st-century superpower or power and act like a 20th-century dictatorship. And we also have to affirm all the fledgling democracies in that region... the Estonians, the Lithuanians, the Latvians, the Poles, the Czechs -- that we are, in fact, going to be supportive and in solidarity with them in their efforts. They are members of NATO."

This is Barack Obama's vision for and commitment on our foreign policy challenges: "I will end this war in Iraq responsibly, and finish the fight against al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. I will rebuild our military to meet future conflicts. But I will also renew the tough, direct diplomacy that can prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons and curb Russian aggression. I will build new partnerships to defeat the threats of the 21st century: terrorism and nuclear proliferation; poverty and genocide; climate change and disease. And I will restore our moral standing, so that America is once again that last, best hope for all who are called to the cause of freedom, who long for lives of peace, and who yearn for a better future."

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